

THE NAZARENES,

AND THEIR CREED.

THE name Nazarenes was given to the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem in Palestine, under the government of Pontius Pilate, and from whose birth the Christian Era is reckoned. He was the son of Joseph, a man of the royal family of David, and the tribe of Judah, and Mary, a virgin of the tribe of Levi. He claimed to be the Messiah predicted by Moses and the Prophets, and he established those claims by his life, works, doctrines, death, and resurrection. He had, during his public ministry, chosen from among those who accepted his claims, twelve men, whom he called Apostles, and whom he designed to witness his wondrous works, and afterwards proclaim his gospel, not only to the Jews, but also among the Gentile nations. The first church, or ecclesia, of the Nazarenes was established at Jerusalem; but during the first century after the death of Jesus, societies of a similar kind were formed in many other places. These ecclesias were under the leadership of bishops or elders, who were persons noted for their talents and virtues, and elected by the members of the congregations. The first fifteen bishops of the church in Jerusalem were converted Jews, the first two of whom—James and

Simeon—were brothers of Jesus. Speaking of these bishops, Eusebius says, "I learned from writers, that down to the invasion of the Jews, under Adrian, there were fifteen bishops in that church, all which were Hebrews, and received the knowledge of Christ, pure and unadulterated; so that in the estimation of those who were able to judge, they were well approved and worthy of the leadership." It is the unanimous testimony of the early christian writers that both the Nazarenes and Ebionites rejected the miraculous conception and divinity of Christ, and that the Gospel wrote by Matthew in the Hebrew language did not support those doctrines. The Nazarenes existed as a church—distinct from others which assumed the christian name—until the fifth century, when their writings, ecclesias, and name, were almost extinguished by the Catholic Apostacy. Yet it must be admitted, that as the Nazarene church was founded by Christ and his Apostles, it must have had the truth, and no church that does not hold the same doctrines, and observe the same practices, can logically claim to be the Church of Christ:

The following appears to have been the leading articles of the faith of the Nazarenes (and to this the writer is committed):

1st. There is one God, who created the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is, whose bodily presence dwells in heaven, where no man can approach unto, but whose spirit, manifested in the works of creation, and providence, is every where.

2nd. That the holy spirit is an emanation from God, as light from the sun, which spirit is experienced in the heart, and manifested by the life of every true believer.

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3rd. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, or Christ, predicted in the Old Testament, that he was a man of the seed of David and race of Abraham, but that in accordance with God's oath to David, and his own perfect life, God adopted him as His Son, which adoption was manifested by the spirit anointing him at his immersion, by his holy life, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and dead, and establish his kingdom on the earth.

4th. That man is a creature formed of dust, subject to death, and whose future life depends on a sincere belief in, and obedience to the requirements of the gospel, by which life and immortality have been brought to light.

5th. That the devil is not a person, but a principle inherent in man as the consequence of sin, and manifested in various ways; but chiefly in antagonism to the laws of God and the plan of salvation revealed in the Scriptures, which principle personified is to be destroyed by Christ, and man for ever delivered from its effects.

6th. That Hell, or *Hades*, is the grave or places where the dead remain unconscious until the resurrection, when the righteous will—as a reward—receive immortality and an inheritance in the Kingdom, and the unjust will be consigned to the second death, called everlasting punishment and eternal destruction.

7th. That the kingdom of heaven will be the earth in its renewed state, that the King will be Christ, that the subjects will be, not only the faithful Jews, but also the believing Gentiles out of every nation.

8th. That it was necessary, on coming to a knowledge of the truth, to be immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ.

9th. That it was right to observe and keep all the moral precept of the law, as well as the commandments of Jesus.

10th. That it was wrong to war with an enemy, to quarrel with a friend, to use profane language, enter places of vain amusement, or engage in politics.

11. That it was right for every man to follow some honest occupation, and be charitable to the aged, the poor, and afflicted.

12th. That it was the duty of every intelligent believer to present the truth to each other, bring up his children in the faith, and take the Scriptures only for authority in doctrine.

Reader, where art thou? Will you accept the faith and cast in your lot with the ancient Ecclesia of God, and become an heir of immortality, or still keep friendship with the world, and go down to everlasting death?

All to whom this Tract is sent are requested to reply.

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